

March 3, 2021

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Amy Ford Keohane, I am from Riverside, CT and I'm a longtime supporter of CT Against Gun Violence. I have lived in Connecticut for 26 years and deeply value that our state government has prioritized safe and sensible gun laws, making Connecticut among the states with the lowest levels of gun deaths.

I am testifying in favor of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders. I know someone firsthand who shot himself – he should not have had access to a gun, and he would be alive today if ERPO had been in effect in his state.

Extreme Risk Protection Order law is designed to keep guns out of the hands of people who are at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others. If passed, HB-6355 will make necessary improvements to a law that is already in place and working in Connecticut to keep us all safer.

Given that up to two-thirds of CT gun deaths are by suicide, and firearm suicide is the second leading cause of suicide in CT, it is crucial that we strengthen, not weaken ERPO, now more than ever.

ERPO provides a proven, life-saving, last-resort mechanism, with due process protections, to temporarily remove firearms from individuals who are judged to be at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others. When other measures to voluntarily and temporarily remove the gun from the possession of someone who may cause harm fail, ERPO is an effective life-saving measure that includes due process protection.

Risk protection laws are demonstrated to reduce firearm suicide. A Duke/Yale/UCONN study reported that In CT, for every 10-20 risk protection orders issued, one suicide is [prevented](#). Another [study](#) reported that Indiana's extreme risk laws reduced firearm suicide rates 7.5%.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Ford Keohane

Riverside, CT. 06878